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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8685
INFO RUEHKL/ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0324
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0140
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0066
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY 0105
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1006

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000417

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: ABDULLAH MEETS WITH HAMAS, FAILS TO INFORM ABBAS

REF: 06 KUALA LUMPUR 982

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Mark D. Clark
for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah received a senior Hamas delegation on March 3, apparently without President Abbas' prior knowledge. Abdullah used the occasion to call for lifting of international sanctions and to reiterate that Malaysian support for the Palestinian government would continue. This is not the first time Malaysia has fallen afoul of the Fatah-Hamas divide. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Khalid Meshaal, leader of the political bureau of the Palestinian party Hamas, and a group of four other Hamas party delegates arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, March 3, for unannounced meetings with Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi and Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar. A press statement from the Malaysian Foreign Ministry announced that the parties discussed the current situation in Palestine, the recent meeting of Palestinians in Mecca and the formation of a unity government. The statement noted that PM Abdullah called for international support for the unity government and the lifting of sanctions on the Palestinian National Authority, while reiterating that Malaysia "would continue to provide whatever assistance, within its means, to the Palestinian unity government."

¶3. (U) In a separate statement to the press from his office in the southern state of Johor, FM Hamid Albar opined that the Palestinian unity government would most likely be fully established "in a week's time." Hamid stated that Khalid's visit was intended to convey to Malaysia the latest developments in the efforts to form a unity government.

¶4. (C) According to local contacts, President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority were unaware of Khalid's visit until after the delegation had arrived in Kuala Lumpur. Palestinian Ambassador to Malaysia, Abdel Aziz Abou Gouche, reportedly only learned of the visit because he had a staff member on the same flight. Foreign diplomats noted Gouche was not invited to attend the meeting and protested to the Malaysian Foreign Ministry concerning the visit. Apparently no one from the Palestinian Liberation Organization / Fatah was invited to participate in the meetings with the Malaysian PM and FM, and the Malaysian Foreign Ministry claimed it did not know that President Abbas was unaware of the meeting. Our sources indicate the Hamas visit was arranged during Abdullah's visit to Syria on February 25-27.

¶5. (C) Comment: Malaysia made a similar faux pas in May 2006 when delegates from both Hamas and Fatah were invited to

represent Palestine at the Non-Aligned Movement conference held in Kuala Lumpur (reftel). Both factions claimed to represent the foreign policy objectives of the Palestinian state, and both parties left in anger. Months later, Foreign Ministry officials still spoke bitterly about the ordeal, particularly the disruptive antics of the Hamas delegate. We will seek opportunities to learn more about the Hamas visit to Malaysia.

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